

know that no veteran will be undermined in their burial, no veteran will be in an undignified burial because of this legislation.

I thank my colleagues for moving forward on recognizing that our veterans have sacrificed for us. We need now to respect that and sacrifice for them.

With that, I ask my colleagues to support the legislation.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I would like to inquire as to whether my friend has any more speakers. If not, I reserve the balance of time, as we have no more speakers.

Mr. MICHAUD. I have no further speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I once again encourage all Members to support the Senate amendment to H.R. 4057, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) that the House suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendment to the bill, H.R. 4057.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

DIGNIFIED BURIAL AND OTHER VETERANS' BENEFITS IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2012

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 3202) to amend title 38, United States Code, to ensure that deceased veterans with no known next of kin can receive a dignified burial, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 3202

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the “Dignified Burial and Other Veterans’ Benefits Improvement Act of 2012”.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

Sec. 2. Scoring of budgetary effects.

TITLE I—CEMETERY MATTERS

Sec. 101. Furnishing caskets and urns for deceased veterans with no known next of kin.

Sec. 102. Veterans freedom of conscience protection.

Sec. 103. Improved communication between Department of Veterans Affairs and medical examiners and funeral directors.

Sec. 104. Identification and burial of unclaimed or abandoned human remains.

Sec. 105. Exclusion of persons convicted of committing certain sex offenses from interment or memorialization in national cemeteries, Arlington National Cemetery, and certain State veterans’ cemeteries and from receiving certain funeral honors.

Sec. 106. Restoration, operation, and maintenance of Clark Veterans Cemetery by American Battle Monuments Commission.

Sec. 107. Report on compliance of Department of Veterans Affairs with industry standards for caskets and urns.

TITLE II—HEALTH CARE

Sec. 201. Establishment of open burn pit registry.

Sec. 202. Transportation of beneficiaries to and from facilities of Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 203. Extension of reduced pension for certain veterans covered by medicaid plans for services furnished by nursing facilities.

Sec. 204. Extension of report requirement for Special Committee on Post-Traumatic-Stress Disorder.

TITLE III—OTHER MATTERS

Sec. 301. Off-base transition training for veterans and their spouses.

Sec. 302. Requirement that judges on United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims reside within 50 miles of District of Columbia.

Sec. 303. Designation of Trinka Davis Veterans Village.

Sec. 304. Designation of William “Bill” Kling Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic.

Sec. 305. Designation of Mann-Grandstaff Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

Sec. 306. Designation of David F. Winder Department of Veterans Affairs Community Based Outpatient Clinic.

SEC. 2. SCORING OF BUDGETARY EFFECTS.

The budgetary effects of this Act, for the purpose of complying with the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go-Act of 2010, shall be determined by reference to the latest statement titled “Budgetary Effects of PAYGO Legislation” for this Act, submitted for printing in the Congressional Record by the Chairman of the Senate Budget Committee, provided that such statement has been submitted prior to the vote on passage.

TITLE I—CEMETERY MATTERS

SEC. 101. FURNISHING CASKETS AND URNS FOR DECEASED VETERANS WITH NO KNOWN NEXT OF KIN.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 2306 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsections (f) and (g) as subsections (g) and (h), respectively;

(2) by inserting after subsection (e) the following new subsection (f):

“(f) The Secretary may furnish a casket or urn, of such quality as the Secretary considers appropriate for a dignified burial, for burial in a national cemetery of a deceased veteran in any case in which the Secretary—

“(1) is unable to identify the veteran’s next of kin, if any; and

“(2) determines that sufficient resources for the furnishing of a casket or urn for the burial of the veteran in a national cemetery are not otherwise available.”; and

(3) in subsection (h), as redesignated by paragraph (1), by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(4) A casket or urn may not be furnished under subsection (f) for burial of a person described in section 2411(b) of this title.”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Subsections (f) and (h)(4) of section 2306 of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), shall take effect on the date that is one year after the date of the enactment of this Act and shall apply with respect to deaths occurring on or after the date that is one year after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 102. VETERANS FREEDOM OF CONSCIENCE PROTECTION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 2404 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(h)(1) With respect to the interment or funeral, memorial service, or ceremony of a deceased veteran at a national cemetery, the Secretary shall ensure that—

“(A) the expressed wishes of the next of kin or other agent of the deceased veteran are respected and given appropriate deference when evaluating whether the proposed interment or funeral, memorial service, or ceremony affects the safety and security of the national cemetery and visitors to the cemetery;

“(B) to the extent possible, all appropriate public areas of the cemetery, including committal shelters, chapels, and benches, may be used by the family of the deceased veteran for contemplation, prayer, mourning, or reflection; and

“(C) during such interment or funeral, memorial service, or ceremony, the family of the deceased veteran may display any religious or other symbols chosen by the family.

“(2) Subject to regulations prescribed by the Secretary under paragraph (4), including such regulations ensuring the security of a national cemetery, the Secretary shall, to the maximum extent practicable, provide to any military or volunteer veterans honor guard, including such guards belonging to a veterans service organization or other non-governmental group that provides services to veterans, access to public areas of a national cemetery if such access is requested by the next of kin or other agent of a deceased veteran whose interment or funeral, memorial service, or ceremony is being held in such cemetery.

“(3) With respect to the interment or funeral, memorial service, or ceremony of a deceased veteran at a national cemetery, the Secretary shall notify the next of kin or other agent of the deceased veteran of funeral honors available to the deceased veteran, including such honors provided by any military or volunteer veterans honor guard described in paragraph (2).

“(4) The Secretary shall prescribe regulations to carry out this subsection.”.

(b) INTERIM IMPLEMENTATION.—The Secretary may carry out paragraphs (1) through (3) of section 2404(h) of such title, as added by subsection (a), before the Secretary prescribes regulations pursuant to paragraph (4) of such section, as so added.

(c) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the House of Representatives a report on the implementation of section 2404(h) of such title, as added by subsection (a). Such report shall include a certification of whether the Secretary is in compliance with all of the provisions of such section.

SEC. 103. IMPROVED COMMUNICATION BETWEEN DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND MEDICAL EXAMINERS AND FUNERAL DIRECTORS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 24 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“§ 2414. Communication between Department of Veterans Affairs and medical examiners and funeral directors

“(a) REQUIRED INFORMATION.—With respect to each deceased veteran described in subsection (b) who is transported to a national cemetery for burial, the Secretary shall ensure that the local medical examiner, funeral director, county service group, or other entity responsible for the body of the deceased veteran before such transportation submits to the Secretary the following information:

“(1) Whether the deceased veteran was cremated.

“(2) The steps taken to ensure that the deceased veteran has no next of kin.

“(b) DECEASED VETERAN DESCRIBED.—A deceased veteran described in this subsection is a deceased veteran—

“(1) with respect to whom the Secretary determines that there is no next of kin or other person claiming the body of the deceased veteran; and

“(2) who does not have sufficient resources for the furnishing of a casket or urn for the burial of the deceased veteran in a national cemetery, as determined by the Secretary.”.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 2413 the following new item:

“2414. Communication between Department of Veterans Affairs and medical examiners and funeral directors.”.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Section 2414 of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), shall take effect on the date of the enactment of this Act and shall apply with respect to deaths occurring on or after the date that is 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 104. IDENTIFICATION AND BURIAL OF UNCLAIMED OR ABANDONED HUMAN REMAINS.

(a) IDENTIFICATION OF UNCLAIMED OR ABANDONED HUMAN REMAINS.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall cooperate with veterans service organizations to assist entities in possession of unclaimed or abandoned human remains in determining if any such remains are the remains of veterans or other individuals eligible for burial in a national cemetery under the jurisdiction of the Secretary.

(b) BURIAL OF UNCLAIMED OR ABANDONED HUMAN REMAINS.—

(1) FUNERAL EXPENSES.—Section 2302(a)(2) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking “who was a veteran of any war or was discharged or released from the active military, naval, or air service for a disability incurred or aggravated in line of duty, whose body is held by a State (or a political subdivision of a State), and”.

(2) TRANSPORTATION COSTS.—Section 2308 of such title is amended—

(A) by striking “Where a veteran” and all that follows through “compensation, the” and inserting “(a) IN GENERAL.—The”;

(B) in subsection (a), as designated by subparagraph (A), by inserting “described in subsection (b)” after “of the deceased veteran”; and

(C) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(b) DECEASED VETERAN DESCRIBED.—A deceased veteran described in this subsection is any of the following veterans:

“(1) A veteran who dies as the result of a service-connected disability.

“(2) A veteran who dies while in receipt of disability compensation (or who but for the receipt of retirement pay or pension under this title, would have been entitled to compensation).

“(3) A veteran whom the Secretary determines is eligible for funeral expenses under section 2302 of this title by virtue of the Secretary determining that the veteran has no next of kin or other person claiming the body of such veteran pursuant to subsection (a)(2)(A) of such section.”.

(3) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this subsection shall take effect on the date that is one year after the date of the enactment of this Act and shall apply with respect to burials and funerals occurring on or after the date that is one year after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 105. EXCLUSION OF PERSONS CONVICTED OF COMMITTING CERTAIN SEX OFFENSES FROM INTERMENT OR MEMORIALIZATION IN NATIONAL CEMETERIES, ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY, AND CERTAIN STATE VETERANS' CEMETERIES AND FROM RECEIVING CERTAIN FUNERAL HONORS.

(a) PROHIBITION AGAINST.—Section 2411(b) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(4) A person—

“(A) who has been convicted of a Federal or State crime causing the person to be a tier III sex offender for purposes of the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act (42 U.S.C. 16901 et seq.);

“(B) who, for such crime, is sentenced to a minimum of life imprisonment; and

“(C) whose conviction is final (other than a person whose sentence was commuted by the President or Governor of a State, as the case may be).”.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Section 2411(a)(2) of such title is amended—

(1) by striking “or (b)(2)” each place it appears and inserting “, (b)(2), or (b)(4)”; and

(2) by striking “capital” each place it appears.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply with respect to interments and memorializations that occur on or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 106. RESTORATION, OPERATION, AND MAINTENANCE OF CLARK VETERANS CEMETERY BY AMERICAN BATTLE MONUMENTS COMMISSION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—After an agreement is made between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the United States Government, Clark Veterans Cemetery in the Republic of the Philippines shall be treated, for purposes of section 2104 of title 36, United States Code, as a cemetery for which it was decided under such section that the cemetery will become a permanent cemetery and the American Battle Monuments Commission shall restore, operate, and maintain Clark Veterans Cemetery (to the degree the Commission considers appropriate) under such section in cooperation with the Government of the Republic of the Philippines.

(b) LIMITATION ON FUTURE BURIALS.—Burials at the cemetery described in subsection (a) after the date of the agreement described in such subsection shall be limited to eligible veterans, as determined by the Commission, whose burial does not incur any cost to the Commission.

(c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to the Commission—

(1) \$5,000,000 for site preparation, design, planning, construction, and associated administrative costs for the restoration of the cemetery described in subsection (a); and

(2) amounts necessary to operate and maintain the cemetery described in subsection (a).

SEC. 107. REPORT ON COMPLIANCE OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS WITH INDUSTRY STANDARDS FOR CASKETS AND URNS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report on the compliance of the Department of Veterans Affairs with industry standards for caskets and urns.

(b) ELEMENTS.—The report required by subsection (a) shall include the following:

(1) A description of industry standards for caskets and urns.

(2) An assessment of compliance with such standards at national cemeteries administered by the Department with respect to caskets and urns used for the interment of those eligible for burial at such cemeteries.

TITLE II—HEALTH CARE

SEC. 201. ESTABLISHMENT OF OPEN BURN PIT REGISTRY.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT OF REGISTRY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall—

(A) establish and maintain an open burn pit registry for eligible individuals who may have been exposed to toxic airborne chemicals and fumes caused by open burn pits;

(B) include any information in such registry that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs determines necessary to ascertain and monitor the health effects of the exposure of members of the Armed Forces to toxic airborne chemicals and fumes caused by open burn pits;

(C) develop a public information campaign to inform eligible individuals about the open burn pit registry, including how to register and the benefits of registering; and

(D) periodically notify eligible individuals of significant developments in the study and treatment of conditions associated with exposure to toxic airborne chemicals and fumes caused by open burn pits.

(2) COORDINATION.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall coordinate with the Secretary of Defense in carrying out paragraph (1).

(b) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—

(1) REPORTS BY INDEPENDENT SCIENTIFIC ORGANIZATION.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall enter into an agreement with an independent scientific organization to prepare reports as follows:

(A) Not later than two years after the date on which the registry under subsection (a) is established, an initial report containing the following:

(i) An assessment of the effectiveness of actions taken by the Secretaries to collect and maintain information on the health effects of exposure to toxic airborne chemicals and fumes caused by open burn pits.

(ii) Recommendations to improve the collection and maintenance of such information.

(iii) Using established and previously published epidemiological studies, recommendations regarding the most effective and prudent means of addressing the medical needs of eligible individuals with respect to conditions that are likely to result from exposure to open burn pits.

(B) Not later than five years after completing the initial report described in subparagraph (A), a follow-up report containing the following:

(i) An update to the initial report described in subparagraph (A).

(ii) An assessment of whether and to what degree the content of the registry established under subsection (a) is current and scientifically up-to-date.

(2) SUBMITTAL TO CONGRESS.—

(A) INITIAL REPORT.—Not later than two years after the date on which the registry under subsection (a) is established, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to Congress the initial report prepared under paragraph (1)(A).

(B) FOLLOW-UP REPORT.—Not later than five years after submitting the report under subparagraph (A), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to Congress the follow-up report prepared under paragraph (1)(B).

(C) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUAL.—The term “eligible individual” means any individual who, on or after September 11, 2001—

(A) was deployed in support of a contingency operation while serving in the Armed Forces; and

(B) during such deployment, was based or stationed at a location where an open burn pit was used.

(2) OPEN BURN PIT.—The term “open burn pit” means an area of land located in Afghanistan or Iraq that—

(A) is designated by the Secretary of Defense to be used for disposing solid waste by burning in the outdoor air; and

(B) does not contain a commercially manufactured incinerator or other equipment specifically designed and manufactured for the burning of solid waste.

SEC. 202. TRANSPORTATION OF BENEFICIARIES TO AND FROM FACILITIES OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 1 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 111 the following new section:

“§ 111A. Transportation of individuals to and from Department facilities

“(a) TRANSPORTATION BY SECRETARY.—(1) The Secretary may transport any person to or from a Department facility or other place in connection with vocational rehabilitation, counseling required by the Secretary pursuant to chapter 34 or 35 of this title, or for the purpose of examination, treatment, or care.

“(2) The authority granted by paragraph (1) shall expire on the date that is one year after the date of the enactment of this section.”.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Subsection (h) of section 111 of such title is—

(1) transferred to section 111A of such title, as added by subsection (a);

(2) redesignated as subsection (b);

(3) inserted after subsection (a) of such section; and

(4) amended by inserting “TRANSPORTATION BY THIRD-PARTIES.—” before “The Secretary”.

(c) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 1 of such title is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 111 the following new item:

“111A. Transportation of individuals to and from Department facilities.”.

SEC. 203. EXTENSION OF REDUCED PENSION FOR CERTAIN VETERANS COVERED BY MEDICAID PLANS FOR SERVICES FURNISHED BY NURSING FACILITIES.

Section 5503(d)(7) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking “September 30, 2016” and inserting “November 30, 2016”.

SEC. 204. EXTENSION OF REPORT REQUIREMENT FOR SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON POST-TRAUMATIC-STRESS DISORDER.

Section 110(e)(2) of the Veterans’ Health Care Act of 1984 (Public Law 98-528; 38 U.S.C. 1712A note) is amended by striking “through 2012” and inserting “through 2016”.

TITLE III—OTHER MATTERS

SEC. 301. OFF-BASE TRANSITION TRAINING FOR VETERANS AND THEIR SPOUSES.

(a) PROVISION OF OFF-BASE TRANSITION TRAINING.—During the two-year period be-

ginning on the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Labor shall provide the Transition Assistance Program under section 1144 of title 10, United States Code, to eligible individuals at locations other than military installations to assess the feasibility and advisability of providing such program to eligible individuals at locations other than military installations.

(b) ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS.—For purposes of this section, an eligible individual is a veteran or the spouse of a veteran.

(c) LOCATIONS.—

(1) NUMBER OF STATES.—The Secretary shall carry out the training under subsection (a) in not less than three and not more than five States selected by the Secretary for purposes of this section.

(2) SELECTION OF STATES WITH HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT.—Of the States selected by the Secretary under paragraph (1), at least two shall be States with high rates of unemployment among veterans.

(3) NUMBER OF LOCATIONS IN EACH STATE.—The Secretary shall provide training under subsection (a) to eligible individuals at a sufficient number of locations within each State selected under this subsection to meet the needs of eligible individuals in such State.

(4) SELECTION OF LOCATIONS.—The Secretary shall select locations for the provision of training under subsection (a) to facilitate access by participants and may not select any location on a military installation other than a National Guard or reserve facility that is not located on an active duty military installation.

(d) INCLUSION OF INFORMATION ABOUT VETERANS BENEFITS.—The Secretary shall ensure that the training provided under subsection (a) generally follows the content of the Transition Assistance Program under section 1144 of title 10, United States Code.

(e) ANNUAL REPORT.—Not later than March 1 of any year during which the Secretary provides training under subsection (a), the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the provision of such training.

(f) COMPTROLLER GENERAL REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the termination of the one-year period described in subsection (a), the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to Congress a report on the training provided under such subsection. The report shall include the evaluation of the Comptroller General regarding the feasibility and advisability of carrying out off-base transition training at locations nationwide.

SEC. 302. REQUIREMENT THAT JUDGES ON UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR VETERANS CLAIMS RESIDE WITHIN 50 MILES OF DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.

(a) RESIDENCY REQUIREMENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 7255 is amended to read as follows:

“§ 7255. Offices, duty stations, and residences

“(a) PRINCIPAL OFFICE.—The principal office of the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims shall be in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area, but the Court may sit at any place within the United States.

“(b) OFFICIAL DUTY STATIONS.—(1) Except as provided in paragraph (2), the official duty station of each judge while in active service shall be the principal office of the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims.

“(2) The place where a recall-eligible retired judge maintains the actual abode in which such judge customarily lives shall be considered the recall-eligible retired judge’s official duty station.

“(c) RESIDENCES.—(1) Except as provided in paragraph (2), after appointment and while in active service, each judge of the Court of

Appeals for Veterans Claims shall reside within 50 miles of the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area.

“(2) Paragraph (1) shall not apply to recall-eligible retired judges of the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims.”.

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 72 is amended by striking the item relating to section 7255 and inserting the following new item:

“7255. Offices, duty stations, and residences.”.

(b) REMOVAL.—Section 7253(f)(1) is amended by striking “or engaging in the practice of law” and inserting “engaging in the practice of law, or violating section 7255(c) of this title”.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (c) of section 7255, as added by subsection (a), and the amendment made by subsection (b) shall take effect on the date that is 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(2) APPLICABILITY.—The amendment made by subsection (b) shall apply with respect to judges confirmed on or after January 1, 2012.

SEC. 303. DESIGNATION OF TRINKA DAVIS VETERANS VILLAGE.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs located at 180 Martin Drive in Carrollton, Georgia, shall after the date of the enactment of this Act be known and designated as the “Trinka Davis Veterans Village”.

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in any law, regulation, map, document, record, or other paper of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the “Trinka Davis Veterans Village”.

SEC. 304. DESIGNATION OF WILLIAM “BILL” KLING DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS OUTPATIENT CLINIC.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs located at 9800 West Commercial Boulevard in Sunrise, Florida, shall after the date of the enactment of this Act be known and designated as the “William ‘Bill’ Kling Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic”.

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the “William ‘Bill’ Kling Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic”.

SEC. 305. DESIGNATION OF MANN-GRANDSTAFF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTER.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The Department of Veterans Affairs medical center in Spokane, Washington, shall after the date of the enactment of this Act be known and designated as the “Mann-Grandstaff Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center”.

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the Department of Veterans Affairs medical center referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the “Mann-Grandstaff Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center”.

SEC. 306. DESIGNATION OF DAVID F. WINDER DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMUNITY BASED OUTPATIENT CLINIC.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The Department of Veterans Affairs community based outpatient clinic located in Mansfield, Ohio, shall after the date of the enactment of this Act be known and designated as the “David F. Winder Department of Veterans Affairs Community Based Outpatient Clinic”.

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other

record of the United States to the Department of Veterans Affairs community based outpatient clinic referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the "David F. Winder Department of Veterans Affairs Community Based Outpatient Clinic".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) and the gentleman from Maine (Mr. MICHAUD) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and add any extraneous material that they may have on S. 3202.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

S. 3202 is another bipartisan and bicameral product of the House and the Senate Committees on Veterans' Affairs. It's going to improve the lives of veterans and their families.

I want to again thank my colleague, the ranking member, Mr. MICHAUD, and all the members of the committee and the subcommittees for their advocacy of the provisions of this bill. I also want to thank from the other side of the Capitol complex Senator MURRAY and Senator BURR for their work on improving these provisions. It's great working with Members who show that, when it comes to veterans issues, both sides can really come together and agree on issues for the common good.

The first title of this bill pertains to cemetery matters, as one of my colleagues has already said. In June of this year, an indigent veteran with no next of kin was buried in a cardboard box in my home State of Florida. I, like many of my colleagues, was shocked and appalled to hear of this news. As a result, several sections of this legislation directly address that specific issue, and it will ensure that all eligible veterans, regardless of their personal or financial situation, will receive a dignified burial at a VA national cemetery. This would include providing VA with the authority to provide a casket, urn, or other acceptable burial container when a veteran has no known next of kin and the VA is unable to provide one.

This legislation would also provide for more efficient communication between VA and local medical examiners and other agencies to ensure that eligible veterans with no next of kin will be properly laid to rest in a national cemetery. It would also require the VA report to Congress on its compliance with industry standards for appropriate burial containers.

Another section of title I, authored by Mr. CULBERSON of Texas, would direct VA to ensure that any memorial

service respects the wishes of a deceased veteran's family to include the use of religious symbols or volunteer honor guards. Given the numerous difficulties many families face when dealing with the death of a loved one, ensuring that their wishes can be honored with a VA memorial service is the least we can do to honor the memory of that veteran.

The bill would also protect the honor of those buried in America's national cemeteries by prohibiting anyone convicted of a tier III sex offense and sentenced to life in prison from being laid to rest there. Because VA national cemeteries are such sacred grounds, it is important that we preserve the honor of those buried there by excluding those convicted of the most heinous of crimes.

This legislation would provide a pathway toward the establishment of the Clark Veterans Cemetery, located in the Philippines, as a permanent cemetery restored, operated, and maintained by the American Battle Monuments Commission.

□ 1650

As the American Battle Monuments Commission currently operates and maintains other overseas veterans cemeteries, it is the most appropriate entity to accomplish the important task of honoring our fallen veterans who have been laid to rest at Clark.

Title II of this legislation contains provisions that will enhance our ability to provide for the health care needs of our veterans. It includes a measure which would direct VA, in coordination with the Department of Defense, to establish and maintain an open burn pit registry for veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan who may have been exposed to toxic chemicals and fumes caused by open burn pits during deployment.

Many of our servicemembers and veterans have returned home from combat in Iraq and Afghanistan with serious questions and grave concerns about the possible long-term health effects of burn pit exposure. It is my hope that by establishing this registry we can provide them the answers and assurances they seek and develop better ways to care for them and future generations of America's warriors.

Under this title, VA would also be authorized to provide transportation services to and from VA facilities for veterans with health care appointments and in connection with vocational rehabilitation or counseling. Veterans who live in rural communities, who are elderly, who are visually impaired, or who are immobile due to disease and disability often face significant challenges in traveling to access services that VA can provide. It is our intent that VA will use this authority to complement, and not replace, existing programs such as the valuable Disabled American Veterans Transportation Network; and as such, this authority is being provided for 1 year.

Title III of the bill would require the Department of Labor to conduct a 2-year pilot program offering Transition Assistance Program training at off-base facilities in three to five States with high rates of unemployment among veterans. With the permission of the Department of Defense, National Guard and Reserve, facilities could be used. Veterans and spouses would be eligible for the program, which would be designed to train those veterans who did not participate in the Active Duty Transition Assistance Program or who just need to refresh their job-hunting skills.

Additionally, this title would require that judges of the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims reside within 50 miles of the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area during their service. Such a requirement would put the veterans court in line with other Federal courts located in the District, which already have a residency requirement in place.

Finally, this legislation includes four measures to name VA medical facilities in Georgia, Florida, Washington, and Ohio after prominent veterans or civilians who have performed outstanding services to veterans in the communities in which the VA facility is located.

I want to encourage all Members to support the bill as amended.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

The bill before us today, the Dignified Burial and Other Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act of 2012, S. 3202, is a minibus collection of veterans measures that primarily focus on ensuring that our veterans receive proper burials that reflect and honor their service. The bill also establishes and expands several health care and transition assistance benefits, and it names four VA health facilities after Americans with distinguished honor.

I appreciate the hard work of all of our colleagues in the House and in the Senate and of our staffs on the measures that were included in this bill. We all share the same goal—helping our veterans and their families receive the benefits that they have earned and deserve. This bill advances that goal, and I support its passage.

Title I of this bill will allow the Secretary of the VA to provide a casket or urn to those veterans who die without a known next of kin, without identification or without financial means, thereby ensuring that these veterans are laid to rest with the utmost dignity.

Mr. Speaker, there is also an allocation of \$5 million in this title to attempt to address the longstanding maintenance, operation, and ownership issues at Clark Veterans Cemetery in the Philippines. Along with soldiers and civilians of other nationalities, over 2,200 American veterans are buried at Clark. This provision will honor their sacrifices by setting up the process for Clark to become a permanent

cemetery administered by the American Battle Monuments Commission. Clark continues to accept burials, including those from the Iraq war; and to ensure a smooth transition, it is critical that an agreement is reached between the two governments before it can become a permanent cemetery. I am confident that the ABMC will bring this cemetery up to its impeccable standards and that Congress will provide it the resources to do so.

Title II of the bill contains a vital provision requiring the Department of Veterans Affairs, with help from the Department of Defense, to establish a burn pit registry. This registry would be for our men and women who may have been exposed to toxic airborne chemicals and fumes caused by open burn pits. Every time we send our men and women into combat, we need to do all that we can to properly assess their risks of exposure to toxins. It has been decades, and we still do not fully understand the risks associated with one's exposure to agent orange, an exposure causing many veterans to suffer without compensation. We should learn from this history, and this bill puts us on track to avoid repeating it again.

Title II would also enhance VA transportation services to help more veterans access VA health care, and it contains a very timely measure that would extend the reporting requirement for posttraumatic stress disorder through 2016. The rate of PTSD remains high in the veteran population, and we must continue to keep this issue at the top of our radar as well as before Congress and the public so that we can continue to provide the funding that's needed.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, title III of this bill contains an important section that would direct the Department of Labor to provide the Transition Assistance Program, TAP, at locations other than at military installations. This 2-year pilot program will benefit our service-members and their spouses by providing additional opportunity to attend TAP and to learn about their earned benefits. Too many returning service-members are unable to take advantage of TAP. This is especially true for members of the National Guard and Reserve who often return from war to find that they lack the support military communities provide them. The TAP program is critical to a service-member's successful transition back into civilian life, and I am glad to see it expanded.

Again, I want to thank the members and Chairman MILLER for their leadership on this bill, and I urge all of my colleagues to support its passage.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, might I inquire of the time remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Florida has 14½ minutes remaining.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the vice chairman of the full com-

mittee, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS).

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of S. 3202, the Dignified Burial of Veterans Act.

I appreciate my colleagues' diligence in moving this language through the Senate, and I am grateful for the work they have done on behalf of our veterans. I would also like to thank my good friend and fellow Floridian, Chairman JEFF MILLER, and Ranking Member BOB FILNER for the work they have done this Congress to improve the quality of services for our veterans—our true American heroes.

This truly bipartisan piece of legislation incorporates language similar to H.R. 6073, which is legislation that I introduced in the House after learning that Private Lawrence Davis, Jr., a World War II veteran, had been buried in a cardboard box in a veterans cemetery not far from my district. This legislation ensures that veterans with no next of kin and insufficient funds for proper and dignified burials will receive assistance from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Our Nation's heroes deserve to be buried in the same way they served our great Nation—with dignity, honor, and respect. Private Davis deserved better. While we cannot go back and rewrite what has already happened, we can ensure that it doesn't happen again. This legislation is the right thing to do; and in the final hours of this Congress, I am very pleased that this Chamber is taking action on this important piece of legislation. Again, I urge the passage of S. 3202.

□ 1700

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, once again I encourage all Members to support this legislation.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of S. 3202, the Dignified Burial of Veterans Act and particularly section 303 of this bill, which designates the Department of Veterans Affairs facility in Carrollton, Georgia as the "Trinka Davis Veterans Village."

Katherine "Trinka" Davis was a businesswoman from Carroll County who founded the Trinka Davis Foundation in 2004 after realizing the struggles many service men and women faced upon return from Iraq and Afghanistan. Though not a veteran herself, through her generosity, Ms. Davis performed an outstanding service for the veterans of Northwest Georgia.

Mr. Speaker, Trinka made note of the reports of difficulties that many returning veterans and their respective families were facing: loss of limbs, traumatic brain injuries, PTSD, unemployment, and loss of their homes.

Although she is no longer with us, her memory lives on. Trinka left almost her entire estate—over \$18 million—to the Foundation,

which has used it to construct a first class health facility to aid our wounded warriors in their recovery and treatment.

Mr. Speaker, with a war in Afghanistan, a recent one in Iraq, and unrest around the globe, the United States has more than 196,000 active duty service men and women that put their lives on the line—night and day—to protect our families and our freedoms. These men and women accepted the call of duty, leaving behind their loved ones and life as they know it to protect the lives of others.

When our soldiers return from battle, sometimes they do not get the support and assistance that they deserve. Simply put, we owe them more. Just as they have answered the call to serve our country, we must answer the call to serve them. This is what Trinka Davis did.

Thanks to Trinka's generosity and the tireless dedication of her foundation, the new clinic was donated to the Department of Veterans Affairs in August. The doors were opened for veterans to receive outpatient treatment on September 24, and in the coming months the clinic will also include a 42 bed community living center.

While providing a variety of services including primary care, physical therapy, and outpatient mental health services, the facility will serve 3,000 veterans and will allow them to receive treatment closer to home.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that like our veterans, Ms. Davis is a hero. She recognized the needs of our veterans and worked tirelessly to meet them. The Trinka Davis Foundation ensured that Ms. Davis's commitment to the veterans and their families in the Carrollton community and beyond would be preserved through construction of the health facility.

I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Trinka's selfless actions and those who have bravely served our Nation by supporting S. 3202.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 3202.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

CLOTHE A HOMELESS HERO ACT

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendment to the bill (H.R. 6328) to amend title 49, United States Code, to direct the Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security (Transportation Security Administration) to transfer unclaimed clothing recovered at airport security checkpoints to local veterans organizations and other local charitable organizations, and for other purposes.